

1842 - FORFAR, SCOTLAND

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The twenty-one scenes here are fictional. Although based on real names in the Whyte family history, real places & documented history the stories and characterisations in them are entirely figments of my imagination. These scenes have however allowed me to make use of research material developed while preparing my family history.

John R. Whyte, August 2020.

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A bustling energetic market town and Royal Burgh with 9,000 inhabitants. An ancient royal history, in the heart of the county of Forfarshire and location of the Sherrif, Baillie & police courts. A commerce based on weaving, trading & weekly farmers markets for the surrounding agricultural community. New railway link to the coast at Arbroath, and established turnpike roads to Dundee and Perth. Rivalry with Brechin and Kirriemuir.

1 William & Margaret

A pale morning summer light was starting to creep in through the heavy bedroom drapes on the first floor of the Manor House as Margaret turned over in bed as best she could and tried to cry herself to sleep. The news that her ninth child, Charles had died at childbirth was just too much to bear for now. It had all happened so suddenly and a good week earlier than expected, so that her William was not yet returned from his visit to Dundee.

It had been a long and difficult night after an uneventful pregnancy and the midwives had done all they could, with Doctor Craik's distant assistance. Now all she had was the grief, the emptiness and a need to share her emotions with the other women in the family who could understand. Normally strong and confident in all that she did, she needed the comfort of her sister-in-law Elizabeth who had also suffered the loss of a child and of Aunt Margaret whose generosity of spirit and compassion would lift them all.

At forty and after nine pregnancies, Margaret knew in her heart that her days of childbearing were probably over. Perhaps she should devote more of her time and energy to the needs of her young and challenging family. She also knew that she must find a way to help William, a loving but errant husband, to be a more integral part of the family and not so austere with the children, as his father had been with him.

Her Ure and Campbell family connections across Forfarshire were increasingly important for William's growing legal practice. She could accept his travelling across the county and to Dundee for his work, but his seemingly ill-justified journeys to Edinburgh and sometimes further afield were a problem. A problem recorded with presents, brought home most probably in atonement - a gilt carriage clock, a pair of Chinese vases, a portable inlaid writing desk, and silver and crystal to dine with.

But she would think about all that in a few weeks. For now, she needed to recover her strength, self-belief and purpose in life after this failed pregnancy. To help sleep come she pictured each of her children in turn and her plans for them in the coming years and soon drifted off into an uneasy slumber.

William had known since he was a boy that the family's leather trade and shoemaker crafts were not for him. It was not just the dreadful smells of the tan yards and sweaty manual labour of the craftsmen, but his intellectual interests had been stimulated early-on by the writings of the great men of Edinburgh's Select Society and the Golden Age. He had done well at the Grammar school, especially in the classics and had completed his legal training with some ease. In recent years he eagerly sought out the Edinburgh Review with its focus on the Whig reform politics being led by a new generation of Scots in London.

He had battled his strong-willed father on the law as a career and finally won grudging acceptance for his different path. Becoming a Writer or solicitor has been an easy choice for him, but the harder choice had

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been to make his legal career in Forfar and not in Edinburgh. He still wondered what might have been, and secretly hoped that one day one of his sons would follow him into the legal profession and perhaps become a Writer to the Signet (W.S.) or even a judge in Edinburgh. But with the support and excellent family connections of his wonderful wife Margaret he had built a good, county-wide legal practice.

He balanced the inevitable work on local land disputes and long-held family grudges with more challenging briefs from the Sheriff-Depute of Forfarshire and at the Forfar Sherriff Court. And more recently he had been appointed as local agent for the British Linen Bank, which promised involvement in many interesting business transactions, as well as a safe place for the local townfolks' savings.

Still he loved to escape to Edinburgh and on one occasion by ship down to London for intellectual stimulation from the latest literary thinking or to hear the great Scottish Whig reformers like Broughton and Macaulay. And of course, he loved to search the bookshops there for treasures for his growing library. He knew his wife did not like these travels and was perhaps suspicious of them and his motives, but maybe if he took her with him next time – that is, if she was not pregnant yet again.

Late that morning at the law office of his younger brother Robert in Dundee he had received the upsetting news of his wife's unexpected miscarriage and had urgently summoned his clerks to start the ride back to Forfar. Robert had been very solicitous and promised prayers from his wife Elizabeth and all the Pullar family. Before leaving he rode over to call on Margaret Campbell Adam in Broughty Ferry, his wife's aunt and one of the people closest to her, to give her the sad news. Margaret had cried a little, embraced him warmly and promised she would be in Forfar within the week. He knew how close the two Margarets were and thanked her for all she did to support her niece.

As he rode home, he thought about how much his wife and their children meant to him - perhaps it was more than he sometimes realised or ever showed. He also reflected that what he had come to understand as a heavy-handed manner with the children had in fact just been copied from his father's strict behavior with himself and his brothers. He loved Margaret deeply and knew he must find a way to be more present in her and the children's lives.

As he and his two clerks passed Inverighty Bridge on the turnpike and neared home he wondered how best to broach the subject of her joining him on occasional visits to Edinburgh. Perhaps she could see some of the latest fashions and newest shops. Maybe his sister Elizabeth could help to persuade her. And then suddenly he realized that his horse was past the Cross with only one more turn on Castle Street up Manor Street and home.

2 Broughty Ferry & Madras

Margaret Campbell Ure/Adam lived in Broughty Ferry, a neat and very-proper little town on the east coast side of Dundee, where the textile barons and nabobs lived in their spacious and splendid mansions. Now at over seventy she liked to take the time to savor each moment in life and was rarely bothered by the hustle and bustle of others around her. It was early summer, although she thought that did not seem to mean much except that maybe the steady rain was warmer than at other times of the year.

As she lay back in bed after a late breakfast with the recently arrived large packet of news from the family in Madras strewn around her, she thought how much she would love to hold them all in her arms again. It was so hard to have her and her sister Anne's children and their families disappear to India for most of

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their adult life. Only the customary mid-career three-year furlough gave the family any opportunity to reunite and to meet all the wives, children and sometimes grandchildren. But at least for now she knew from these dispatches what was happening in their lives.

Margaret and her sister Anne had married brothers in the well-known Adams family and both military men. Margaret's husband John had been a surgeon with the Honorable East India Company Service in Madras and from his HEICS connections many of her and Anne's children had sought their careers and fortunes in the Madras Presidency. Now since Anne's death some years ago, Margaret had become the person all the Adam family in India told their secrets to.

Their enlightening and sometimes titillating dispatches came irregularly, and she devoured them over and over again. And, too strong to resist, she shared these secrets with Anne's daughter and her niece Margaret Campbell Adam/Whyte in Forfar, even when it was about Margaret's own brothers and their families. Though separated by a generation and a distance of over fifteen miles the two Margarets were very close.

Though the news could be over a year old by the time it arrived by sea from India at her doorstep, it seemed sometimes to Margaret that she knew more about what was going on in Madras than in Edinburgh. Still word did come from friends with contacts in the Scottish city - men like Jane's husband, William Roberts who still had good Edinburgh connections and could be relied on for the latest political news, if not ladies' fashion. Margaret much preferred fashion to politics which was too complicated to bother with, run by men anyway and in her view changed faster than fashion.

What made some of the stories even more piquant for her was that the Governor of Madras was John Elphinstone, 13th Lord Elphinstone, a relation of nephew George's wife. Elphinstone was a soldier and a bachelor, but the gossip had been that his appointment in India was made to scotch rumours that young Queen Victoria had fallen in love with him. And, it had recently been announced in Edinburgh that another Scotsman George Hay, 8th Marquess of Tweeddale was to succeed Elphinstone in Madras later that year.

Her niece Margaret had arrived from Forfar by carriage that day for a short break after her miscarriage. To distract her, she took the opportunity to recount the latest news from her brothers, cousins and all the family in Madras. They both were always fascinated by the goings-on of the family and events in a distant land where everything was so different to the life in Scotland.

Madras, Summer 1841 - An Extract

Across the Madras Presidency, now including Mysore and Ceylon, the Honorable East India Company Service seemed to have things under control and where the sepoy problems of Bengal had been handled better to the south at Fort St. George. But things were not always so calm in John and Susan Adam's extended family, where drama and tragedy seem to go hand in hand in this oppressive tropical climate.

A few years earlier Major Alexander Adam, John's cousin, had lost his wife Anne and their only son Alexander in a medical blunder during childbirth. John still felt guilt and remorse on having been away on military duties and unable to oversee the birth himself with the midwives. Alexander has been left with three young daughters to care for, but the extensive local Adam family had all rallied round to help. Then a year ago Alexander had met and married the delectable Mary Anne, a close friend of darling cousin Charlotte Elphinstone, who bless-her-heart had captivated the hearts of his three young girls.

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This time the problem was with John's wife Susan who was in a bad way with a bout of malaria. A month before John had sent her and the four children, with Mary Anne and her girls up to the cooler climate of the hill station at Ooty in the beautiful Nilgiri Hills, where the Presidency had its summer capital near the Maharaja of Jodhpur's Arranmore Palace. He and Alexander had planned to join them later, but with the worrying news of Susan's illness he had accelerated the plans with young cousin Anne's husband Dr. Donald Young to put the Madras Military Clinic on a summer footing. With most of the troops now up near the hill stations, there was less to do in the city anyway and certainly much less venereal disease to treat.

The two of them set off two days later with a few junior officers and a Company of sepoy. They had made good time on the road for the first days only to run into trouble near Krishngiri, where the local Native Association had unexpectedly blocked the road and made it impassable with a large native crowd. The choice was clear - they could use their obvious military presence and force their way through or take the time to talk the natives into opening up the road again. While, with all the sepoy and officers in uniform they looked like overwhelming military authority to impose themselves, John was not sure with the present poor state of discipline that the sepoy would actually obey an order to fire on the natives.

John and Donald, although officers in the Company Service, were primarily medical men and did not always feel entirely comfortable with what they saw as an overly authoritarian military approach to simple native administrative matters. So, they held counsel with the other officers and persuaded them to set-up camp and settle-in to talk with the local leaders to find a solution. The most difficult to convince was the officer in charge of the Company of sepoy, a belligerent bull of an Englishman, long on loud opinions but short on any intellectual grasp of the actual situation.

John, with his soft Scottish accent, and two of the English officers sat down with the native leaders with help of one of the havildars and a young naik to translate. It was a slow painful process with the translations through the multiple layers of explanations and inevitable array of misunderstandings. After some time it was clear to John, that apart from detailed and probably justified local administration and political grievances what the Native Association craved most was just to be listened to and respected.

So, the three officers spent the rest of the day doing just that, and eventually came to a provisional new agreement for continued military passage through the area. They promised to present this agreement to the Governor's adjutant in Ooty, immediately on their safe arrival there. Then the Company of Sepoy, proceeded by their English officers marched in full military splendor past the Native Association members and safely on their way to Ooty.

On arrival, John rushed to the spacious villa where the Memsahibs Adam were staying with their households. Susan apparently had come through the worst of the pain and convulsions with the help of a quinine treatment from Dr. Rankin of the Governor's staff. But she needed constant care and cooling to help manage her body temperature and to get back her strength. Her eyes flickered with a half-smile to show that she knew that he was now there by her side. But after talking to Dr. Rankin about her treatment and prognosis there was not much-else he could do for the moment.

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Mary Anne had taken charge of the seven small Adam children during Susan's illness, but looked more than a little harassed as dark-skinned native women swirled around her and shrill little boys and girls ran riot throughout the villa. John told her Alexander would be coming-up with the next group of officers and introduced his colleague Dr. Young, whose wife Cousin Anne was staying on the far side of the valley for the summer.

It was time for tiffin. So, together they sat in the shade on the wide terrace, with its wonderful views of the Nilgiri hills, and tasted the new Assam tea sensation from Chittagong. Eager for news, John and Donald questioned her on the latest gossip from the Governor's entourage in their summer quarters nearby. Shyly she told them of the salacious rumors about the Adjutant's dear wife, a bachelor English major who took an unhealthy interest in local young men, and of course the really big scandal of the summer season...

3 Tannery Succession

As Thomas came out of the meeting with his older brother at the offices on Castle Street, he thought back on the times when as a young boy he had the run of the yards and by eighteen had learned all the tanning and currying skills. He loved working with the men, the manual nature of the work and knew he was respected by them. He admired his father in spite of his dominating manner and had worked closely with him for over twenty years. But he also understood that many things needed to change to keep up with times. William, whose legal and academic world he often found hard to follow, had also made very clear his views on the need for change and Thomas appreciated his support.

He reflected that, now more than ten years on, he needed to provide for Jessie and the girls' future and maybe find them a real house of their own somewhere safe. In his twenties Thomas had met Jessie Wilson in Forfar at the St. James Fair - she had a ready smile and was a lovely, kind girl who had now borne him two pretty daughters Mary and Jess. As the daughter of a farm hand he had known that she would never fit with the Forfar burgess ways and the Whyte family. They had been discrete over the years and he hoped that few outside the village knew of their relationship, but he knew that his frequent rides to Tannadice over these many years told no lies.

Patrick knew in his bones and his head that at eighty-four his days on this earth were now numbered. It had been a good life with solid progress for the family business since the end of the Shoemakers Guild days and, with Margaret who he had loved since she was eighteen, the foundation of a large family to continue the Whyte name. He was also immensely proud of what, as Secretary of the Vestry he and the Minster, Dr. Skinner had achieved in 1824 in building St. John's Episcopalian Church and the bond of friendship they had built over the years. John Skinner, a truly great man who regrettably had passed-on only last year, had led his congregation firmly and with clear conviction following the difficult times for Episcopalianism after the 1745 rising.

However, there were something else Patrick wanted to make sure of before it was too late, and so he hastened up Manor Street as fast as his bent back allowed to meet with William, whose legal skills were often important to the family. He had always known that William was not destined for the tannery business and was immensely proud of the position in society that his son had achieved. With himself and younger son Thomas guiding and managing the tannery it had all worked out well. But the three of them needed to plan ahead for the future of the Tan Works and to keep it in the family.

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He arrived at the house with a clear mind and, as so often, took a moment to admire its wonderful location at the top of Manor Hill. It was a splendid stone house built on the foundations of many before and designed for a large family. He and Margaret had made a good decision to turn it over to William, Margaret and their large brood some years before and move into the house on Castle Street.

As William waited for his father, he knew what they had to do. Twenty years ago, William had helped his father gain control of the Tan Works from others in the family, and had watched him build it into today's dominant position. But now his father was nearing the end, times had changed and many things were different, particularly with the new wealth in Forfar from home weaving. He had also discussed it all with his wife Margaret during their recent visit to Edinburgh, as it would impact their family.

Thomas, with his practical knowledge and experience, was the obvious one to continue the tannery, but his inheritance as fourth brother might be difficult if one of his older brothers came back from Aberdeen. William liked Thomas and his ever-boyish enthusiasm, admired how he led the men, and although so different in temperament and character they had always got on well. However, Thomas was not married and, as William and his father knew, had long had a mistress in Tannadice who had borne him two girls. So, Thomas seemed unlikely to provide a solution for the next generation.

Another aspect was a gnawing concern about competition from the new industrial manufacturing in the Scottish central belt. Clearly these new machinery processes could make a big difference to both the cost of manufacture and consistency of the end quality, and where cheaper standardized boots and shoes would ruin a key part of their local business. He had discussed this over the last year with acquaintances in the leather trade in both Arbroath and Montrose, and they were all worried to varying degrees. It could be that with the new railway to Arbroath port that new steam-powered equipment might be easier to obtain. William had, last week, agreed the issues with Thomas and he was now ready to put their plans to their father.

Climbing the circular stone steps in the house with great care, Patrick joined William in the first-floor study, filled with piles of legal manuscripts that the housemaids were clearly forbidden to dust. He was pleased to see the portraits of himself and Margaret still hanging on the far wall and he crossed the room to admire William's burgeoning library and some recent copies of the Edinburgh Review. He and his son shared support for the Whigs and the political ideas of the Review, and often talked about the need for serious reform in the country. Together they stood at the main window and took in the Manor view down the long garden to Forfar Loch in the distance. A view from Manor Hill that had been prized by many since the times of Queen Margaret, when she had her first manor house built on the hill next to husband's castle.

William knew that in spite of his aging body his father's mind was still acute and perceptive, and so with a few good-hearted words they got down to business. First, they had to consider the manufacturing challenges from the south and the need to modernize the operations to accelerate the slow traditional tanning processes and have less reliance on manual currying work that produced such uneven results. This would need investment in steam generation and equipment, new skills and renewed leadership over the next years. William, with his bank contacts, was sure he could deal with the money side of this. The more difficult part was the leadership that would be necessary, and that meant moving on to discuss the burning question of succession and inheritance.

Thomas had told William that he felt confident he could provide the necessary experience and hands-on management to launch the necessary improvements in the tanning and currying. But William and Patrick

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were not so quite so sure as Thomas was possibly too close to the yard men that he had grown-up with and might not realise just how much effort was required to bring such changes in an artisanal trade. However, it was clear that with his brothers David and Patrick's departures from Forfar many years ago there were no other obvious family options. So, they agreed it would be up to Thomas to ring the changes.

But how to handle this and ensure the tannery and the lands at Talis, Barch Pots and West Shell did not slip out of family hands and end up being sold. William put forward the proposal, as he and Thomas had agreed last week, that Patrick would transfer ownership of the business and lands now to Thomas and so avoid any later inheritance challenges. Patrick after a lengthy discussion agreed in principle, but clearly from his reaction was in no rush to let "now" really mean now! He suggested to William that this should be a proper sale and for a price that the others might find difficult to object to, especially if they were to share in the money from the sale in his Last Will and Testament.

William had expected this and, in his bank agent role, said that based on previous bank estimates a sum of £750 might be appropriate and that he could get such a price covered by the bank with a Bill. He further added that he could have all this recorded in the Forfar Register of Sasines. Patrick sat silent for a very long time with his hands clasped in front of him in thought, and then finally nodded his head in agreement.

But Patrick was far from finished as the family's chief deal maker and had one more card to play. He took time to savor the moment with a summary of the whole situation and all the challenges, and then pointed out the gap in it all. That Thomas at forty-three had no heirs of his own so far and that Jessie Wilson was certainly not going to produce one as his wife! So yes, the deal could proceed as agreed but only if Thomas agreed to name one or all of William's own sons - William P., John or Robert - as his lawful heirs. William in his turn sat silent for a time, then smiled and nodded his head.

The deal was done and William called for Mary to bring a bottle and two glasses.

4 A Summer Luncheon

Elizabeth had invited sister Jane and sister-in-law Margaret for luncheon with a clear plan in her mind. It was time they moved to action on the ideas they had often discussed. Over the last year they had each sought out the best information available on the issues and new ideas that were being tried elsewhere. William Hunter and others had been a great help here with their excellent Edinburgh contacts.

They were meeting at Elizabeth's house on East High Street, as she lived on her own and no one would suspect three ladies of doing anything so revolutionary as plotting the future of Forfar. Betsy had prepared an appetizing cold luncheon in the parlor, with a large jug of fresh barley water. Elizabeth had been on her own almost 30 years since her husband and cousin William Whyte and their baby daughter Margaret had both been tragically killed. The pain and grief of that loss had never left her, but she tried hard not to make it a burden for others. Since then she had devoted her life to helping and supporting the other females in the extended Whyte family, and there were many challenges. Not least with the almost twenty nieces and nephews she had acquired over the years, both in Dundee and Forfar.

Last year in addition to the income from her husband's estate, she had inherited the estate of her Uncle William Whyte in Dundee. Many years ago, he had taken his young nephew William, her future husband, into his business when it was clear that Patrick would have none of him. They had formed a close bond almost like father and son, and she had grown to love them both. Now with her brother William's

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assistance - why so many Williams and Margarets in the family - she had sold the tannery assets in Dundee and invested carefully. How good it was to have banking connections in the family.

She was sure of Jane's passion and determination to see something happen, even if it took some years. She remembered how fiery and opinionated Jane had been in her twenties, when she had scared-off every man who came to call on her, to her father's desperation. That was until local boy William Roberts came back from his legal studies in Edinburgh and she had met her match - and so had he! They now had two young daughters and his law practice was thriving. Jane now worried about cleanliness and smell in the Burgh streets and saw clearly the need everywhere for modernization. Elizabeth loved Jane for all her strengths and her weaknesses.

Margaret was a very capable woman, but not like Jane. In place of Jane's passion, Margaret brought a calm and committed organization to everything she took on. She even managed, on occasions, to get her husband (Elizabeth's brother) William to participate in some of her projects. Margaret also brought excellent Ure, Adam and even Campbell connections in the area and could be an important ally who would stay the course. William was a busy Sherrif Court lawyer and bank agent, but if he agreed he could play a very important role in their plans and he and William Hunter got on well together, which was another advantage.

William for his part had made Elizabeth smile just last month when he had persuaded Margaret for the first time in many years to join him on one of his trips to Edinburgh. They had both come back happy and smiling with a new four-poster bed, coming by sea of course, of all things! Clearly something had gone right for them since the loss of their ninth child during childbirth. Elizabeth and Margaret's Adam family aunt in Dundee had done all they could to help Margaret though that difficult time.

Today, they would focus on plans for the three areas they had discussed, all linked with their strong belief that Forfar urgently needed modernisation. They understood that as women they and their ideas would not be listened to by the men and it would all be dismissed as emotional, irrational women stuff. So, their plan needed to combat this as well - that was where the Whyte men could play their key role.

First the tannery, where Jane was blunt as usual.

"It still looks and smells probably as badly as it did a 100 years ago. There is an urgent needed new facilities and offices. It's in the center of the town and the family must show leadership to all the burgesses."

Second as they all agreed, the Town Council had tried to improve the streets, but something more must be done about the smell, the lighting and a better way to deal with the household waste and midden collection. Everyone understood the importance of this waste for the surrounding agricultural land, but as Jane said:

"Surely not at the cost of keeping Forfar in medieval times, like Kirriemuir and Brechin."

Third, while some of the bigger houses might be able to find acceptable water, most had a poor supply that often did not pass the smell or taste test. For Margaret it was clear:

"Forfar has to find a reliable source of fresh water for its inhabitants and its factories, even if they have to put their own dam across Glen Isla for a reservoir!"

At 56, Elizabeth was well aware that as women their views and suggestions would not be listened to and be dismissed as female chatter by her father Patrick, the burgesses and the Town Council. However, she

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had given some thought on how to provoke these men into taking the issues seriously, as was already being done elsewhere. She told the others:

“Male ego, the need to be seen to be important and their small mindedness are all things that we women see and that we now need to turn to our advantage. But it may be a long campaign and we will need to grow our numbers.”

Jane face broke out into a wide smile.

“Taking-on those pompous assess on the Town Council - that’s a great challenge that I will love to be part of. What’s your plan for this, Elizabeth? “

5 George Adam’s Teapot

The elegant silver teapot had sat on the sideboard in Manor House for almost forty years. It had been inscribed and presented to George Adam, Adjutant by his regiment the First Battalion, Dundee Volunteers to commemorate the 1796 standing-down of the regiment at the end of the French Revolutionary war. The teapot, along with his 1790 royal warrant as adjutant signed by King George III and Prime Minister the Duke of Portland had remained with his wife Anne Ure Adam. On her death they were both passed to her daughter Margaret Adam Whyte.

However, as her aunt Margaret Ure Adam had told her there were some in the family that felt the teapot should have stayed in the Adam family and probably with one of her brothers’ families.

“Margaret, it’s not your brother George and his elegant wife Charlotte Elphinstone, the Elphinstone’s have plenty teapots of their own, that you should be concerned about for the teapot. It’s your brother John’s wife Susan, who seems most in need of shiny objects!”

Margaret could only smile at her Aunt’s adroit comments about her two sisters-in-law and replied:

“With both John and George and their large families in Madras or sometimes London, I never see them or their wives and so have no knowledge of all this family angst over a teapot. None of them may ever come back to live in Forfar now that they have found careers and riches in the Far East.”

“Out there in Madras it’s a new Adam family with new family experiences and shared values that they are building. The teapot should stay in Scotland. I would like to honor Mother’s wishes and pass it down within the Manor House to the safe keeping of the lady of the house. It’s only a teapot, after all is said and done.”

Her aunt replied: *“Good luck, my dear. I am sure this subject will come up again.”*

Having dealt with the weighty matter of the future of a Scottish teapot, the two ladies turned their attention to the intriguing and immediate challenge of the new Assam tea from Chittagong mentioned in the Adam family Madras dispatches and when they could hope to taste some in Scotland.

6 William Quhyt

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As he came down the East High Street towards the Cross, William Whyte saw Thomas McHardy come across from the Pend to talk with him. He and William often did business together, as in addition to being the Forfar Town Clerk he was a solicitor with his father's long-standing firm of McHardy & Alexander.

"Greetings, Mister Town Clerk"

William said with a smile for his old friend. Thomas replied in almost a whisper:

"Have you time for a dram in the snug at the Inn? I have something that may interest you."

After Thomas had collected some papers from the Clerk's office by the Cross, they settled down in the Gentlemen's Snug, well before the Town Council would adjourn there after their meeting.

"So, what's all this secrecy about, Thomas?"

"Well, as you know McHardy & Alexander has to maintain for the Solicitor General all the old contracts we were responsible for that are not in the Commissariat Books of the Diocese or the Forfar Register of Sassines. We have a good collection in the attic and sometimes I like to look through the old documents for some titbit of history of our Burgh."

"Yes, the old documents and records can be very enlightening, where they still exist. It was such a tragedy that most of the town records were lost after the risings in 1745. A year ago, in the Commissariat Books of the Diocese of Brechin I found the 1657 testament of my ancestor, William Quhyt. It was quite a family find!"

"Well William, I have found another document for you to examine and likely for the same William Quhyt."

"Thomas, what I would most like to find is a record of his birth and who his father was."

"It's not that, but perhaps in some ways more interesting."

Drawing a yellowed old document from his folder he said:

"Here is his 1637 marriage contract with Charles Dickensone and daughter Margaret Dickensone. It details the dowry to be paid by Charles Dickensone and William's land and properties to be given in life-rent to her and her children should he die before her. It's all laid-out in good understandable Scots, which was better for most working people in those days than Latin, even if most of them could not read or write."

"On that point Thomas, I sometimes wonder if all our years of Latin legal training were really necessary now that we see such a significant reduction in the use of Latin in our business."

"Be careful with the document William, its fragile. As you know I cannot let you keep it - but you could have it copied-out and returned to me later."

"This is a wonderful find. Thank you, Thomas. It means a lot to me. It's the oldest family document I have seen. I have always been curious about the Whyte family history, their leather crafts and the beginnings of the Forfar Cordiners in the early 1600's. I will get it back to you by the end of the week and undamaged."

"But Thomas, let me offer you another dram before those bletherers from the Town Council arrive and dominate the conversation and all the noise in here?"

7 Civic Modernisation

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William had been in a black mood most of the week as his important case at the Sherrif Court was not proceeding as expected and his titled client was not well pleased. He also reflected with some chagrin that, even when satisfied, this kind of client was not a good payer. But he tried to put that behind him as he walked down Castle Street to his sister Elizabeth's house. He was not sure why she had asked to see him, but he had his suspicions and knew full-well after all these years that she was probably into something that was not her business. On the way he nodded his thanks to Dr. Craik and smiled to a group of chattering ladies coming out of the drapers, which helped lift his mood.

Betsy showed him into the parlor and he settled in with a glass of whisky from the sideboard. As she came in, he immediately saw that it was not to be the austere, difficult Elizabeth today but the smiling, beguiling one that only a few knew and that he had loved since childhood. Quickly but amicably they dealt with the pleasantries about his work and the family and got down to business. Following the example set by his father Patrick, all the Whyte family males showed an uncommon degree of respect for the role of their women in the family.

"William, thank you for all that you have done for me over the last few months with my Dundee inheritance from Uncle William, and the sound investments you have recommended and purchased for me."

"My dear, it was the least I could do in the circumstances. You should now be well set-up for the future and could even think about moving houses if you want."

Elizabeth deftly turned the conversation towards the family, the Tan Works and how well their father and brother were running the business. Immediately William thought he guessed what was coming - she was upset about the inheritance decision, that Patrick had unexpectedly announced at dinner last week. William knew that they had decided on a good path with Thomas, and that it was for the men to decide and not for female meddling in family affairs.

As she launched into her spiel, William settled with a sense of unease into the large arm chair.

"I have grown up with the tannery all my life – its smells, its detruis, its craftsmanship, its local trade. I also have practical experience of the business in Dundee with both Uncle William & my William and I have been of help to father behind the scenes on several key matters."

He sighed deeply before she continued.

"But the tannery looks and smells probably as it did well over 100 years ago – there is an obvious need to modernise with new facilities, offices and probably new work methods."

William reflected to himself on what his father had often said about her:

"She can be a real challenge for men and often speaks more like us, than a humble daughter of the house. It's a great pity she wasn't born a man."

William wondered what Thomas would say about all this. And now, she seemed to want a stronger role – based on her competence and not her sex.

"With the Tannery, the Whyte's should be setting an example to Forfar, it's not about family inheritance it's about what we do with it. In other Burghs they are bringing changes and Forfar with its illustrious history should be among the first, not as one of the last to understand the issues."

She was clearly into her stride now and so he sat back with a second whisky and listened to his impassioned sister tell him that there were wider serious day-to-day civic needs, where other Burghs were getting things done, and that Forfar was stuck in the 17th century. She laid out the initial thoughts that

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she with Jane and Margaret had developed on safety on the streets at night, domestic refuse, middens and dung, piped fresh water, and street and workplace lighting.

“House refuse and the supposedly valuable muck in our middens are the principal reasons that our Royal Burgh smells like an over-ripe farm yard. I know the Town Council has over the years improved street refuse collection and cleaning, but we need to be looking at better ways to deal with this and more effective drainage in town - we need to learn from and follow the example of others.”

“We all know that a source of fresh running water has always been a problem for Forfar and that much of what we use does not always pass the smell test. I hope that Dundee and the 1832 cholera epidemic taught us a lesson. But what is our Town Council doing about it? If we can have a rail line to Arbroath, surely we can have a water line from Glen Isla!”

“The new road to Kirriemuir and the railway to Arbroath are wonderful developments for Forfar and should open up the way for more civic enterprise. With the coal we have coming into Forfar on the rail line, is there being given to a local gas works, as in other towns? From what we have heard and read this could give us street lighting in the mornings and evenings, and perhaps for the linen factory sheds.”

She continued:

“I have read the recent Edinburgh Reviews you passed to me. While I am impressed by the great ideas and Whig push for action on reform in the country, I do not see any thinking about a place for women in this wonderful new society. Instead, we women need to concentrate on more practical things in our own Burghs. We must open the minds of our over two hundred burgess and Town Council to critical improvements that everyone here rich and poor need now.”

“But first we Whytes need to give a lead in Forfar with action on the tannery. So, how do you suggest I broach this with father?”

He was totally flummoxed, this wide-ranging set of important civic challenges was not what he had expected from a woman, even his sister and it had wide and long-term implications for all of Forfar. After some thought he replied:

“I can see what you are aiming at and I am impressed by all the thought that you, Jane and Margaret have put into this. I also see the stubborn male opposition you will face. But these are good ideas and maybe there might be a way to make progress, albeit a slow one. Let me think about it for a week or two and talk with a few of the more influential Burgesses. As you say, we can push for progress in our lifetime or just leave it to the next generation - that is always the great challenge for any Town Council.”

With a knowing smile she came back to her starting point

“But, what about the tannery?”

“Elizabeth, at eighty-four you will not get any action from Father on this, and he may not even hear you out. Instead, we will work on Thomas. He has some ideas of his own and so may be more inclined to listen to your thinking. He is our practical day-to-day man for the tannery, but as we both know does not always think things through for next month or next year.”

8 Rape in the Tannery

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It had been a clear bright spring-time start to the morning. Margaret was in the garden tending her roses when Mary came running out of the house to say that cook wanted to see her right away. This was unusual as Margaret Lindsay was a very competent person who effectively ran everything from her kitchen and dealt with most of the household issues. So, she went back in the see what the problem was.

As she entered the kitchen, she saw Cook attending to a huddle of clothes in a corner of the kitchen, with the house maids Isobel and Mary standing by whispering in hushed tones. As Margaret came closer, she saw that the huddle was in fact Jessie Kerr the kitchen maid who was crouched, disheveled, whimpering and clearly in some kind of shock. Cook stood up when she saw Margaret come in and motioned for them to talk on the other side of the kitchen.

"Jessie's just been raped by one of the men at the tannery. I had sent her down there with the note that you gave me for Mister Thomas. She had been away a time and so I sent Mary off to look and she found her weeping by the tannery wall and brought her back here."

"My god! The poor wee soul, she's only thirteen! Are you sure? How could such a thing happen in broad daylight? Is she injured? Do we need a doctor? Do you know what happened? Who did this?"
So many questions flooded into her mind, but she let cook continue.

"I've cleaned her up as best I could. There was some blood, it was her first time, and she has some bruising on her face and body. I think she's still in shock and didn't want to talk much, but I did get out of here that it was that Fingal Dobie, at the tannery."

Margaret went over to Jessie and knelt down beside her.

"Jessie, we will take care of you. This is a terrible thing but you are strong and we will help you get through this. When you feel ready, I will have Mary and Alex the gardener both see you home. I will also ask Doctor Craik to come to the house and take a look at you, and I will come later and talk with your mother."

Cook nodded her support and Margaret went upstairs to think. William was due back soon for lunch, she would tell him and they could decide together what to do about this. Fortunately, all the children were off in Dundee on a family visit with Margaret and not due back until the end of the week. She had taken Jessie on as a kitchen maid less than a year ago, when her mother had lost her man who had been such a loyal worker in the tannery. Everybody in the family liked Jessie with her shy smile and willing manner. Life could be so unfair and it was already so hard for Jessie's mother.

As William came in, she let him take a whisky from the sideboard and then sat with him in the drawing room. Without further ado she told what she knew of Jessie's rape and had arranged with Doctor Craik. His reaction was strong and immediate:

"My god, she's only thirteen! She's Jake Kerr's only daughter. She's under our protection in our house and in our tannery. This cannot be allowed to pass. Fingal Dobie will pay heavily and at the High Court in Edinburgh!"

Margaret explained that she would visit Jessie and her mother that afternoon, after Doctor Craik.

"I will tell them that we will keep paying Jessie as though she was here and will welcome her back as soon as she feels ready. Jessie will need help to regain her confidence, but she is young and strong and I know cook, Isobel and Mary will all help. We will just have to work through it and pray that she is not pregnant as well."

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William asked how sure she was of the facts and Margaret repeated what cook had told her. They both knew that this kind of thing was not uncommon and that, with the poor treatment and distrust of women still in present times, the police often took little or no action. Things might be improving in London and Edinburgh, but in the countryside changes in the attitude towards women were slow to come. In William's legal experience, rape was seldom reported and often went unpunished. As a result, families sometimes acted on their own outside the law.

"After lunch, I'll go down to the tannery and speak with Thomas. If he agrees, I think he should be the one to deal with Fingal Dobie."

He knew that Thomas, although unmarried, had two young daughters in Tannadice and would see the situation both as an employer and as a father. It was a fraught and almost silent lunch in the Manor House that day for all concerned.

As William readied to leave, Margaret's parting words were:

"Please don't do anything that might get us or the family in trouble. I know you are a solicitor and believe in the law, but I also know you are very angry about this and take it personally."

Thomas with his father Patrick ran the family tannery and William had been glad over recent years to be well removed from these obligations with his growing legal practice to occupy him. As he walked down Castle Street he turned over and over in his mind how best to deal with the culprit, without legal consequences for the family and then suddenly it was clear. Arriving at the tannery office William waved to his younger brother to come over, and with the door firmly shut quickly told him what had happened and that Jessie had said it was Fingal Dobie.

Thomas had a soft spot for Jessie especially after her father had died this last year and was appalled with what had happened to her. He knew that Margaret and the women would take care of the girl, but realised that with William he would have to deal with the culprit and that they could expect little help from the Burgh police. After a short exchange between them the plan was agreed and Thomas called for Fingal Dobie to come to the office.

Fingal Dobie was a thin man of medium height with a surly manner, unmarried and in his forties. He had turned up about a year or so ago from Dundee and was a reliable worker in the currying shed, but seemed to have made few friends. As he came into the office, cap in hand, his manner quickly darkened when he saw both Thomas Whyte and William Whyte facing him. *"What's a' this about, then?"*

As agreed, Thomas did the talking and was to the point, direct and blunt.

"You raped Jessie Kerr here in the tannery yard this morning. You raped a girl of thirteen, whose father you had known. You raped a Whyte family servant while she was on an errand here from the Manor House."

"Says who? I was working in the currying shed all the time."

"Says Jessie Kerr."

"Who is going to believe a chit of girl, who doesn't know her arse from her elbow."

William spoke for the first time

"I and my wife believe her, so does Thomas here and so will a court."

"Well, with her flirty eyes and show of leg, she's been asking for it and clearly enjoyed it when it came."

"That's a damned lie, Dobie. And a change of tune! Are you admitting to it?" said Thomas.

"So, what are you going to do about it? The Burgh Polis aren't going to listen to a wee girl's tales."

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Thomas jabbed Fingal Dobie in the chest, looked him hard in the eye and said very slowly:

“This what I am going to do, Dobie. There’s a group of farming men I know who will be in Forfar tomorrow for the market. If you’re not gone from Forfar by then, I am sure they will find you and take great pleasure in doing to you just what you did to Jessie!”

Fingal Dobie visibly whitened and spluttered:

“You can’t. I’ll have the Polis on you.” then fled from the office and the tannery.

William and Thomas shook hands.

“Well handled, Thomas, that was well done. Maybe it’s not real justice for Jessie, but she’s still young and let’s hope she can get over this terrible experience. I don’t think we will see Dobie again in Forfar. But maybe we should warn our friends in Kirriemuir and Brechin.”

9 At the Drapers

Margaret Whyte had been tall and slim with long dark tresses when she had first met William. But now at forty and after nine pregnancies her body had changed, although she still felt confident that she could carry a long ball-gown well, and she needed to rethink her wardrobe. She had arranged to meet her sister-in-law Jane that afternoon at the drapers on Castle Street and afterwards for refreshments at Jane’s house. They both looked forward to spending a few convivial hours together as, with the pressure of family and household responsibilities, it was not often possible.

Margaret had visited Edinburgh earlier in the year with William, for the first time in a number of years. The shops, the fashions and fine clothes that both men and women were now wearing had made a considerable impression on her. She realized that she needed to update her style, although what was acceptable in Edinburgh might not always work for the Kirk in Forfar. She was particularly impressed with the new Edinburgh store - Kennington & Jenner - where she had purchased, while William was at a meeting, a beautiful new silk slip and two delightful pairs of very fashionable drawers.

In the last few, years Forfar drapers had started to expand their business beyond the traditional rolls of cloth, linens, men’s clothing and materials for local tailors and dressmakers. Now they competed for women customers, with female clothing and other feminine items. A mere draper shop was fast becoming a haberdasher and a ladies’ outfitter. Margaret had proposed that they take a look at the new haberdashery and lingerie items that had come in last week from Kennington & Jenner in Edinburgh.

Mr. Thomas presented his new shop assistant, Elsie from Perth, who clearly knew her business and understood that ladies liked to take their time and look around. After admiring the latest in silks, ribbons and trimmings and selecting a few small items, they asked about lingerie and Elsie took them behind the big drapes at the back of the shop. She pulled out the items that had just arrived from Edinburgh. This was what the afternoon was supposed to be all about for Margaret and Jane!

They had been in the shop for a time when there was a sudden kerfuffle up front with much activity from the shop assistants. Jane peeked through the drapes to the front of the shop to see what was going on and saw two elegantly-dressed ladies - the Countess of Strathmore and a female companion - talking with Mr. Thomson. The Countess was pleasant and polite, and informed him that the family was now in residence at Glamis Castle for the summer and may be requiring his services. After looking at a few local

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cloths and novelties, her companion produced a list of items that they wished to have delivered that week, if possible. The Countess smiled to everyone in the shop and swept back out into Castle Street with her companion.

Jane whispered to Margaret, who was holding a most impressive black corset up to herself at the time: *"That was the Countess of Strathmore. His third one! She was most agreeable with Mr. Thomson. But you should have seen the combs in her hair and the dress she was wearing - that didn't come from a Forfar draper's shop!"*

Taking their purchases, they walked the short distance to Jane's house for a refreshment and to talk some more about all they had seen.

"The Earl, Strathmore that is, must be well into his sixties and Marianne his third Countess is certainly younger, maybe fifty at most. She looks good for her age, but maybe that's all down to the pampering in London. He's a daughter by the first wife that died, but lost both sons from the second that also died. Although not before one son gave him two grandsons to carry-on the title."

"My goodness me Jane, you are like an encyclopedia of the nobility. Where do you hear all this?"

Jane laughed and threw back her long golden-red tresses.

"I have an old Forfar school friend at Glamis Castle, who just loves to gossip. Do you want to hear what Marianne Cheape did to become his third Countess? Or about the new second Countess of Airlie and her new baby?" ...

10 New Ideas for the Tannery

At forty-one Thomas was a mature and competent craftsman, well used to manual work and to directing and managing his workers. He was in charge of running the family tannery, although his father at eighty-four still turned up every day at the offices and would occasionally over-rule him. Thomas had learned all about tanning during his childhood when he had the run of the yards. Now he had a team of experienced men who had supervised this process for many years and whose judgement he trusted completely.

However, it had been clear for some time that their tanning methods took too long, with some heavy hides taking up to almost two years. These vegetable tanning processes had been evolved since Roman times with the objective to destroy any chance of putrefaction or decomposition of the natural material. It involved scraping the hides carefully, sinking them in smelly lime pits, cow dung pits, and vats with tannic solutions from tree bark, and yards strewn with drying hides in various states of decomposition. These yards were often situated on the edge of town for good reason. There was a lot of hard manual work involved particularly with the hand pumps, bark mill, and beating the wet hides to soften them.

In today's 1840 world he had to find a way speed-up these processes and reduce the heavy manual work. He hoped they had not waited too long, as there were rumors of challenges from the new towns in the central belt to the south. Last month he had gone to Arbroath on the new railway line and visited the tanneries there. He had a good exchange of ideas, particularly on steam pumps and beating systems, with the tannery owners there who were open to exchange experiences.

The curriers dressed the tanned hides by hand and it was an arduous job for skilled craftsmen. After sorting the hides, it involved splitting the hides, trimming, shaving and scouring them as necessary. They

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were then treated to give a better colour and rubbed extensively with tallow and oil on both sides to make them pliable. The last finishing stages depended on what the leather would be used for and could include polishing, graining, blackening or japanning. Thomas had learned in Arbroath about new methods for currying and the machinery being used elsewhere and had come back with many thoughts to discuss with his father, and a sense of urgency in this.

Other experienced craftsmen then made the leather boots, shoes, gloves and other items to order. These crafts had been passed down over many centuries through an apprenticeship system, like the Shoemakers of Forfar. But like all traditional methods these needed challenged on a regular basis. With the currying work and boot and shoe making, Thomas understood that his issues were not only the slow manual work, but also the uneven quality of that work - and that his customers sometimes complained about. The Arbroath tanners had put in his mind that machine-done work here might give a better and more even quality result. So, he needed to make contact in Perth or even Glasgow with people who could be of help on the machinery possibilities.

Thomas felt the weight of responsibility on his shoulders for the future of the family tannery, but he was confident that he could manage these issues and prepare the business for the challenges of the 1850's. He knew from hard-won experience over the years that his father was not a supporter of change in traditional methods and he would need to be ready to argue his case in some detail and have it all fully laid out. Even then he would need strong arguments and a well-prepared plan. Maybe he should talk to his older brother, although William did not understand much about the tannery nor machinery.

He would spend a few days in Tannadice with Jessie and the girls, and think this through before seeing his father next week. After almost a month he longed to see these three most important women in his life.

11 School Improvements

Isobel Byers had only really got to know Jane Whyte when she married Jane's cousin Robert Whyte. Isobel and Robert had fallen in love in their early twenties and with family approval had married two years later. Jane was several years younger and they had not had much contact as children but, as young women, had found much in common and bonded in a shared interest in the future of Forfar.

With great sadness all around, Robert and two of their young children had died from disease within four years and Isobel found herself a widow with an infant son David to care for. The Whyte family had helped considerably and Jane had given her older sister-in-law much practical support. Over the next few years William Hunter, a close friend of her deceased husband and a local lawyer, had pressed his claims to look after Isobel and her son. Finally, after a few years of hesitation Isobel said yes, and over the next five years they had added five more children to her lot in life.

Jane Whyte was a rebel in the family from her earliest days. With her long golden red hair, strong personality and outspoken manner she had terrified many of the young and older men who came to pay their respects over the years. Her father, Patrick had been at his wits-end on how to control his daughter and get her off his hands, even though he loved her dearly. Then William Roberts, from Patrick's wife's family, came back to Forfar from his legal apprenticeship in Edinburgh and Jane had met her match. He for his part was much taken with Jane's quick wit and outspoken views and they formed an excellent team. Two daughters soon followed and Jane began to think more about the future for women like her daughters.

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William Hunter and William Roberts were linked not only by their wives but by their profession. In spite of professional rivalry in the Baillie and Sherrif courts, they all got on well and were determined that Forfar should be a success in the 1840's and for the future. Both preferred to leave Burgh matters to the Town Council, and tried hard not to get involved in its issues. But when the subject of the state of Burgh schooling arose their wives had given them little choice and clearly needed their assistance in areas where the ladies had little or no experience.

Jane and Isobel were proud of their efforts over the last few years as part of a group of friends from the Forfar burgess families which had resulted in Provost Meffan and the Town Council's major decision last month to expand the Burgh school system under a School Board. There would be at least three more Burgh schools opened around town with boarding facilities, improvements in teaching at the Grammar School, and a much-demanded more liberal curriculum at the Academy. All this was planned to bring better schooling to Forfar, more opportunities for local students and to make it all more widely available to every family.

The ambitious plans were to expand the school curriculum, as other Burghs were doing, beyond the traditional Latin and Greek classics of the Grammar School, with English grammar and writing, literature, mathematics, geometry, algebra, astronomy, natural sciences, philosophy, geography, history, French and commercial subjects such as navigation, bookkeeping and drawing. The Town Council would have to find trained school Masters and assistants, and so probably advertise in Edinburgh and across Scotland.

Boys and girls up to eight got their infant schooling at one of the dame schools in town and here Isobel, with 6 children herself, remarked that:

"It's a great way to get the young ones out from under one's feet and give them something useful to do during the day."

This elementary schooling was preparation for the boys for the next stage at the Burgh or Parish schools. But as Jane had added:

"Sadly, for most girls elementary schooling is probably all the education they will get, and this will be lifetime handicap."

Local opportunities for higher education for females were at the very few private or adventure schools. These schools were run by well-qualified mistresses and covered a range of practical, artistic and academic subjects. But most families did not see the need and wanted their girls in work as soon as possible. There had been talk of a female industrial school, but the Town Council had not taken this up at their meeting.

While Jane and Isobel were disappointed with this lack of progress on female schooling, they were not surprised and understood it would take time. The blockage was old-fashioned male ideas and attitudes towards women and these had to change before any progress could be made. They both felt that these prejudices and distrust of women made no sense to it in today's modern 1840 world. As Jane said so often to all who would listen:

"Better education is the path to a better life for the women of Scotland."

They both intended to keep fighting.

12 Freemasonry

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Jane Whyte watched as her husband, William got ready for his meeting at the Masonic hall on Coutties Wynd, off the East High Street. They now had been married for six years and had two lovely girls, Margaret who was five and Elizabeth almost one year old, as testament to a happy union. But this was the first time they had talked about freemasonry and the Lodge. It all seemed like a big silly game to her and one where the women were not allowed in.

William Roberts, solicitor and son of a father of the same name who had also been a Forfar solicitor, was well known in Forfar and in good standing in the Burgess community. Earlier this year he had been initiated as an Entered Apprentice mason of the Ancient Lodge of Forfar Kilwinning No. 90 in Forfar. As he explained to Jane, tonight he would be passed and raised to that level by the brotherhood.

Over five years ago he had been appointed Clerk for the Shoemakers Guild and so understood their rules, degree of master, officers and election of Deacon. From this he also knew of their role with the other Guilds in Forfar's Elijah, Royal Arch Chapter No. 12. But he had had almost no previous knowledge of freemasonry, the Kilwinning Lodges, nor the Grand Lodge of Scotland in Edinburgh until his brother-in-law, William Whyte had approached him a year ago on the subject.

He saw, as someone who had not passed through the Guilds and degrees conferred by the Royal Arch, becoming a mason as an honor and recognition by men who knew him well. The royal, ancient and mysterious masonic traditions and their strong moral values were also important to him. He knew that the Lodges across Scotland were open to a wide range of men not just craftsmen, and that several of his fellow Burgesses from the merchant's side were members. He was sponsored by the Whyte family members of the Lodge - Patrick, William and Thomas, along with recognition of his father's similar history with the Lodge.

Jane, like most of the women in Forfar, was deeply suspicious but also curious about this strange male world of Freemasonry:

"But what do all the masonic rites and symbols mean? What does a lodge actually do? Who are the leaders? What do you do at these meetings? Why all this childish secrecy?"

William's answer was simple:

"I am not allowed to discuss these matters with people who are not members of the brotherhood. But I'm sure you know something about it from seeing your father and brothers participate over the years."

"It's just a good excuse for lots of drinking and eating, and pretending to be important! But I suppose its charity efforts do help our orphans and old folk. So, there may be some good in it. How much will it cost?"

"Jane, the Lodge makes a lot of charitable contributions in town. Together with the Church and Town Council it's an essential part of looking after our more unfortunate citizens - particularly the orphans, widows and the old. But it's also a way to make and build important relationships between us men."

"So, William, what's a Lodge?"

"The original Kilwinning Lodge 0 dates back almost 700 years and the origin of the rituals is from the early stone masons who came from mainland-Europe to build our great cathedrals. King James VI was a freemason himself you know. The Lodge has very strong moral and ethical principles and teaching but it's not religious. That much should give you and all the women much comfort."

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“So, you a well-known solicitor, start as an Apprentice. What happens to you after that?”

“The Master craft members from the Royal Arch Chapter come into the Lodge as fellow-craft members. Obviously, I am not from that background and level of masonry but over the years I can rise to Master Mason and perhaps one day even Grand Master of the Lodge, like your father.”

“It still sounds more like a drinking club. Maybe, I should start a lodge for the Burgess women, where we could talk about putting to right all the things the men on the Town Council make such a mess of.”

William always enjoyed and respected his wife’s direct way of talking, and their back and forth on issues. He hoped that freemason secrecy would not become a problem between them. He watched as she threw back her long golden red hair and marched off to see to dinner for their two young girls. How fortunate he had been to marry her and also tonight to have the good support of her father and the Whyte family. His father would be proud of what he had achieved in Forfar.

13 A Baker’s Wife

It was late in the morning and a moment in the day when Margaret Whyte/Pullar could relax upstairs away from all the hubbub below in the baker’s shop. Her husband was sleeping after a night in the bakery, the early morning rush in the shop was over, and the rest of the family were either helping in the shop or at school. She sat back dozing and reflected for a moment on things. She was happy in her life and felt she had an important role to play in all their lives, where she loved being the mother-hen at the center of her large family. But she realized there were a few signs on the horizon that might need thought and planning with James, although getting his attention on family matters was often a challenge.

Back in 1818 when she had visited her mother’s Adam family in Dundee as a comely girl of twenty-one, she had no idea of what life might hold for her except two weeks of escape from family life strictures in Forfar. She had met James Pullar on the second day at his family’s baker shop on Pullars Close, off Murraygate and, after convincing her father over almost a year, domestic bliss had followed in good time thereafter. Now, at forty-six, it all seemed to have passed in a flash and she was a mother of ten children, from William at just 3 months to Elizabeth now a twenty-year old and with her own opinions and hopes. She sometimes teased James that he made bread at four in the morning and babies at four in the afternoon. He now ran his parents’ bakery with the help of two of his younger brothers and his sons, but it was hard work through the night to have everything ready for the early morning customers.

Although Dundee was only fifteen miles from her native Forfar, Margaret had found it to be a completely different world. A bustling industrial and trading city with a busy shipping port, it had little in common with a rural county town. Textiles were the big thing with, in 1840, forty spinning mills including the Dens Works, the world’s largest linen manufacturer. She had also heard recently in the shop that the new whale oil treatment was going to dramatically increase the spinning of raw jute fiber from India and this might even replace flax and linen. Also, from Dundee’s origins in traditional shipbuilding and whaling industries, the port was now a part of an active costal marine trade around the United Kingdom, that benefited even inland Forfar.

She had seen many country people migrate into the city and also all the Irish immigrants. With all this activity, Dundee’s population had doubled over the last forty years to almost 60,000 in 1840. But what had made a big difference to daily life for many poorer families over the last few years, in Margaret’s view, was that for the first time there was plenty of work for women in the textile factories.

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Unfortunately, as she saw every day, housing and sanitation had not kept pace and many working-class families lived in overcrowded slum areas where hunger, disease and infant mortality were common. The city's Cholera outbreak of 1831/32 had had a terrible impact and there was always a fear of its return. Hidden away in their own baker's building in Pullars Close Margaret knew they were much better off than most and had a regular income to always put food on the table. She felt strongly that more of the big money being made by the Dundee textile barons should be invested in improvements in the city.

With regular contact with her Forfar family she still felt close to them and loved to have all the children come down to visit. She was especially pleased to have introduced her brother Robert to James' sister Elizabeth and they had now been married eight years with three daughters of their own. Robert's solicitor practice was doing well and William in Forfar often used him as his Dundee partner for Sherrif Court work. Last year she had got up to Forfar by coach to see her parents with some of the children. It had been a fraught visit with her mother's illness, but her father, Patrick had been in fine, if commanding form. On a quiet moment with Thomas she had learned about his Jessie and the two wee girls in Tannadice and she was so pleased for him.

Sometimes her sister Elizabeth would visit. She was so good with the children, especially the older girls who were very impressed by their Aunt Elizabeth. She also saw her sister-in-law Margaret Adam when she visited her Aunt Margaret in Broughty Ferry. Margaret knew the two were close and that they kept in touch with all the Adam family in Madras. So many Margarets in the family! With herself, her mother Margaret Roberts/Whyte, her sister-in-law Margaret Campbell Adam/Whyte, Margaret Campbell Ure/Adams in Broughty Ferry, her own daughter Margaret Roberts Pullar, Jane's daughter Margaret Roberts, Robert's daughter Margaret Roberts Whyte and lastly David's daughter Margaret Chalmers Whyte.

But now in 1840 she was mostly concerned about the state of the town's schooling or lack of it for her large brood and any possible re-occurrence of a cholera, typhus or smallpox epidemic. It was also clear that her older boys were not much attracted to working life in Dundee as a baker. With all the shipping, spinning and international trade tales in town, they were already thinking of easier or quicker ways to make money. So, even with ten children, she and James were concerned what might happen to the family bakery in the longer-term.

All-in-all she thought she and James had done well, but there were a few challenges ahead - she had always been good at understatement - for them and the children. For now, however, it was time to go downstairs and start the dinner preparations for her brood with the family cook.

14 A Mystery Death

To escape the rigors of the household routine and serious world of their parents and grandparents William, John and Robert had built a secret world in the thick bushes at the bottom of the Garden by the Forfar Loch. It was the perfect place to live-out schoolboy battles of their Jacobean heroes and the great Malcolm Canmore. Only Thomas the head-gardener and his staff really know where the camp was, and had promised to keep the secret in exchange for biscuits and cakes. William the oldest at fourteen was the natural leader for these escapades and they had become a team to be feared and admired - especially by their three impressionable younger sisters.

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Sargent Burns was a big friendly man who was comfortable in his role of informing Forfar loons on the many laws about things such as public behavior in the street, ale houses, removal of waste and control of middens. His reputation depended on not being a strict disciplinarian but instead helping everyone to try follow all these regulations. But where he felt most uncomfortable was in dealing with things where you had to work it out for yourself - where nobody saw what happen or nobody admitted to doing it.

He knew it had to be done, but it was one of the police jobs he liked least. He knocked on the cottage door and waited until a wee urchin creaked open the door.

"Is your mum home?"

He heard her coming and saw she was worried to have a constable at her door and no man at home. *"Agnes Brodie, I am sorry to tell you but your man's deid. He fell off the back of his friend Davie's horse last night. They were both dead drunk and he hit his head on a big stone. You will need to arrange for the body."*

She started to weep silently and gathered the urchin close to her. Embarrassed by the emotions and not knowing what else to say he turned and left.

As he was returning from visiting Agnes Brodie, he was accosted in Castle Street by an agitated Thomas, the Whyte's gardener at the Manor House. He told the Sargent that the Whyte boys had found a body in the Loch. The two of them turned back to Manor street as quickly as they could. Paying his respects to Mrs. Whyte and her cook who were at the front door, he passed into the garden and down to where it reached to the Loch. There was no sign of the boys, who had been banished upstairs to their room.

The body was floating at the edge of the Loch and they pulled it in with a hook. The man's body appeared well dressed not a laborer and with no obvious wounds that the Sargent could see. They covered it and Sargent Burns said he would send someone with a barrow to collect it later. Back at the police station he reported to Superintendent Cooper. For both it looked like it might just be a case of getting drunk, falling in Loch and drowning.

When Geordie brought the body in later, they both took a look. Neither recognized the man and the quality of his sodden clothing marked him as being of some social standing. His leather bag contained a few essential travelling items and papers, mostly ruined by their time in the Loch. The papers seemed to be some kind of technical drawings about tanning.

"Sargent Burns, go to the tannery and ask Thomas Whyte if he would come and take a look at these papers for us."

Thomas immediately recognized the papers as documents for the new machinery he had discussed that very week. *"Where did you find these papers, Superintendent?"*

"On the body next door, Mr. Whyte. Will you take a look?"

On seeing the body Thomas exclaimed

"Dear God, what happened to him! This is terrible! I was only talking with him yesterday! Its Aengus McBride, the engineer from Perth."

"Mr. Whyte, do you know where he spent last night, after meeting with you?"

"No. Well he came up on the railway from Arbroath, where he had been seeing the tanners there and was to spend the day with me at the tannery before taking the stage coach back to Perth the next day. I did

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not ask where he was staying, but as you know it's not difficult to find a room if you have a shilling. There's also the Coach Inn but it's now more of an ale house."

"Thank you, Mr. Whyte. You have been very helpful. Right Sargent?"

Leaving the police, Thomas sought out his friends the two Burgh magistrates, Baillies Doigt and Smythe and told them about the body and added:

"Aengus McBride was a well-known engineer with good connections in Perth. There will be questions about his death in Forfar and what we did about it."

"Aye, Thomas, I get your point. We need to keep excellent relations with Perth at the moment, with that new railway deal in the offering. I'll tell the Superintendent to get to the bottom of this and quickly."

For Sargent Burns it was a simple case of accidental drowning and he thought the Superintendent was making it more complicated than necessary. But the Superintendent's instructions were clear: "

Burns, take the constables and find out what Aengus McBride was doing last night before he died and where he stayed for the last two nights in Forfar. I want the answers by the end of the day! Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir."

Well-dressed strangers stood out like a sore-thumb in town and it took only a few questions to some of the women folk to find out that he had taken a room with Agnes Taylor off the West High Street. As she told it, he looked like a respectable gent and had paid in advance for two nights in her back room. But he never turned up for the second night, and she hoped he did not want his money back. At the Inn it was a more complicated story that took time and a few ales to sort out, but even then, Sargent Burns was not sure to have understood.

According to the manager and serving wench two men had come in late that evening from Brechin and had kept themselves to themselves in a corner of the ale house. Aengus McBride however seemed happy to make acquaintances and had got in with a group of local drinkers, where he put his money on the table and joined the animated conversation. Sometime later he had gone out to piss, but had never come back - it was assumed he had gone off to his lodgings. The two other men had disappeared.

For Sargent Burns while all this might be interesting it made no difference to what had happened. He was telling that to the Superintendent when Thomas Whyte came in with his brother William, the solicitor. *"Superintendent Cooper, this is a bad business and I have been talking about it with my brother. I have some more to tell you about Aengus McBride that might be helpful. He had visited the Arbroath tannery the days before and after visiting here was taking the coach back to Perth. I asked if he was planning to visit the Brechin tannery and he said that he had had bad dealings with them last year and did not trust them."*

Late in the day, Constable Cameron came in with two men in custody, accompanied by a number of local men. The two men were accused of trying to steal a horse at the north end of Castle Street, although they maintained it was a misunderstanding and they only wanted to borrow the horse in question to get back to Brechin. On hearing Brechin the Superintendent asked if they had been in the Coach Inn last night and if they had seen Aengus McBride.

After much hemming and hawing, the answer from the two was finally yes to each question. Both men were becoming nervous and agitated, surrounded by the Polis and with the horse theft question hanging over their heads. Suddenly one of them blurted out:

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"We never put a finger on him. We was told just to frighten him a bit and remind him that he still had obligations in Brechin."

The other howled:

"He was drunk. He ran away towards the Loch. It wasn't our fault if the stupid git fell in the Loch. We just scarpered."

The Superintendent said solemnly;

"Sargent. Lock them up, and we'll see what the Mr. Dewar, the Procurator Fiscal decides to do with them."

And then off he went to inform the Procurator's office, the Burgh Baillies and Thomas Whyte who might be required as a witness. The Baillies were well pleased with the quick results and congratulated the Superintendent on the efficiency of the Burgh Police.

On Thomas and William's way back to Manor Street and a much-needed stiff drink at home, William reflected

"Thomas, from my legal experience this could go either way. Either dismissed as an unfortunate accident as the good Sargent had said clearly from the very beginning, or to the Lord Advocate and High Court in Edinburgh for trial. Our Procurator is a careful man and will get surely get to the bottom of it with more information, maybe also from Perth and Brechin, before he makes his decision. But I am glad I don't have his job."

On entering the Manor house, they were quickly surrounded by three excited boys all agog for news of their body and the murder mystery.

15 Catherine

Elizabeth had always known that Catherine would be the one to stay at home to look after their parents. Even as a child she had a simplicity about her, a mild manner and patent desire to please others that marked her as different from others. As they grew up together her older sisters Elizabeth, Margaret, Isobell and Jane had all taken care of her and protected Catherine.

It was not that Catherine was particularly religious, although she did read her bible every day and went to church twice a week. God and Church was just a consistent thread in her life. But Elizabeth sometimes wondered if Catherine clearly distinguished in her thinking between their handsome Minister, God and the Archangel Gabriel. In the early days one or two young men had come to pay their respects, but Catherine had shown absolutely no interest in them or what they might offer. At thirty-seven she was a confirmed spinster and effectively governess or housekeeper for her aging parents, although her father would have bridled at the term governess.

Their mother, Margaret Roberts Whyte had brought up all her eleven children with exactly the same loving but strict approach, both boys and girls with no favorites nor special treatments. But now at seventy-five she was in fragile health and suffered a lot of pain that often-made living with her hard for others. Catherine's father, Patrick Whyte had been a somewhat austere and distant father, but in Catherine's case he had always seemed to be disarmed by her docile and simple manner. It was not that he had favorites but more that he made kindly exceptions for Catherine.

At eighty-four he still went to the tannery every day to keep an eye on Thomas, had his daily whisky or two, and maintained an active interest in politics with the Edinburgh Review that William passed regularly

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to him. Now in 1842 all three seemed to live together in the house on Castle Street in a knowing and peaceable unity that was only troubled by her mother's illness and infirmity. With Cook who came every day to manage downstairs and Bess as housemaid, Catherine did not have any onerous duties and Elizabeth passed by most days to see them all.

Catherine had always enjoyed needlework and last week Elizabeth had taken her to the drapers to look at the latest silks, ribbons and trimmings. Catherine had been delighted and had come home with grand new projects for the rest of the year. But she had been shocked by the latest women's fashion in corsets and lingerie from Edinburgh - which seemed to come from another ungodly world.

There were a lot of small children in the Whyte family, both in Forfar and Dundee. At the beginning Elizabeth, who adored them all and was a natural heroine for the girls, had thought that Catherine would be good with the younger ones. But she had quickly seen that it was not so, and that Catherine seemed to think of herself more as one of the children than as an adult to be in-charge.

16 Money and Investment

The Scottish preference for prudence and careful money management was often in complete contradiction with a strong commercial instinct and desire to make money. William had seen how his father, who was effectively the banker for the whole family as well as the owner of the family Tan Works, had balanced these opposing positions over the years. But times were again changing fast with the growing strength of the weaving and spinning industry, new commercial and transport opportunities, and the huge local demand for short term credit. The arrival in Forfar over the last few years of branches of most of the Scottish banks had helped considerably and provided a safer place for people to deposit their savings.

The failed Darien Scheme in 1700 and the Poyais 1820 fraud had made Scots very leery of investing in foreign endeavors without sound proven facts behind them. However, expansion in North America particularly to the west with the pioneers was bringing lucrative opportunities to provide credit facilities and loans - which the Dundee money-men seemed to have well-noticed. From afar William had watched how the linen and spinning nabobs in Dundee leveraged their global market position into significant wealth and began to invest it abroad. But the Dundee's commercial and industry focus did not relate much to the rest of Forfarshire and so it was in Arbroath that he had developed his contacts with leading merchants and burgesses.

When Elizabeth returned to Forfar in 1814 after the death of her husband William, she had inherited enough money to buy a house on East High Street and for a small income to live on. Much of this inheritance had come initially from the transfer of her William's share of the tannery, that he had inherited from his own father, to Patrick Whyte - Elizabeth's father. It was a deal that Patrick had much sought as it gave him complete control of the tannery, but perhaps the deal had been a little one-sided in favor of the more experienced man. So, Patrick who recognised this now, was willing to help his daughter whenever she need it.

On the death last year of William, Patrick's last bother - Elizabeth's uncle and uncle-in-law - he had left all his estate in Dundee to her. It was unexpected and so much more than she needed, but he had clearly intended to put her in a strong position within the family, perhaps as Patrick's eldest child and as his successor - even though she was a woman.

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She had gone to her brother for investment advice, both as her solicitor and a local banker. Her ideas here were clear:

“William, I want to invest all this inheritance to try to preserve the capital for future generations and at the same time give me a good income. I realise there is risk with any investment and I look to you for advice on managing that risk as best.”

William was not surprised by her challenge as he knew that, in spite of her limited schooling as a female, she was good at numbers and not easily fooled. He was not sure where she had learned the principles of investment, but he knew father would be impressed and very proud of her. He replied:

“It’s a good sum of money, Elizabeth. You could move to a bigger house and still have money to invest.”

“This house is plenty big enough for me William, although it could do with some improvements. Let’s keep a little money aside for that.”

“In that case, give me a month or so, to talk to people about some investments that might be suitable.”

When they met again, William brought a lot of documents and accounts with him. Elizabeth took one look at all this and said:

“I may not be able to understand all this, especially the accounts. But if you take me through the main options, perhaps we can limit how much detail I need to read and understand.”

“Elizabeth, I am impressed with your willingness to do this. You are the only woman I know who shows any interest in such matters.”

So, he proceeded to outline his suggested plan and the issues she might want to consider.

“First, the majority of your money should be invested in Consols - the 3% government bonds or consolidated annuities issued by the Bank of England. These are the most reliable investment to be found and will ensure that your capital will be safe in the long term. The interest is modest but the risk is extremely low. Another option could be to buy some Foreign Government bonds that carried higher interest rates and are popular in banking circles at the moment and fairly reliable.”

Elizabeth’s reaction was clear:

“I want to invest my money in my country and where I live, not in some Balkan State that I have never heard of!”

Next he outlined some local opportunities.

“The Arbroath Banking Company was founded in 1825 to provide credit to local merchants and has done well, even opening a branch here in Forfar and issuing its own notes. Most of its assets are in property in Arbroath and Forfar and so it seems a safe choice. But they are not issuing any new shares. I talked with two of the Bank’s Directors that I know well and they suggested another idea. The bank is involved in financing the Arbroath-Forfar Railway and there are new 5% preference shares that you could subscribe for. From what I hear, railways across our Scottish nation and linked with England may be the big new development.”

Elizabeth’s reaction again was clear

“That’s exactly the sort of investment that I would like to be part of.”

Lastly, he said that it might be prudent to deposit a percentage of her money with one of the local banks, and this could include the sum she was setting aside of the improvements to the house.

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“The interest you will get will be about 1% less than the bank’s lending rate. But there is considerable competition between the banks, with no agreement between them on charges and interest margins. So, it will be sensible to go to each and see what they might offer.”

“William, if I understand it that’s about seventy percent in Consuls, twenty percent in the railway and ten percent in the bank. It all seems very safe, except perhaps for the railway. Are there any other Scottish opportunities that might make sense? Perhaps I could take a little more risk and try for a better longer-term return or interest rate.”

“Well there are some interesting opportunities in Edinburgh at present that we could look at. Perhaps you could put 50% into Consuls now, subscribe for the Railway Preference shares and deposit the rest in a bank while we look at other ideas.”

“Thank you, William. That seems a very sensible start. I am fortunate to be so well advised. I see you have the application papers for Consuls with you. Can we sign them now? And maybe you can take me through the latest railways accounts you have there and explain what their future prospects look like?”

William realized he was to be there for some time more, and wondered if he could risk another whisky from the sideboard to keep him going.

17 Blackmail

Patrick Whyte as the eighty-four-year-old head of the Whyte family Tannery had known the younger Rab Carter for many years as a fellow member of the Shoemakers’ Guild, Forfar Burgess and in the Royal Arch Chapter. Three years ago, Patrick had lent him the money to acquire important bleaching lands in the town for his business. The bond has been straight forward on a 5-year term, half-yearly interest to be paid and the principal secured on Carter’s property in Castle Street. This kind of bond or contract was common in Forfar between the merchants and trade burgesses, before the new-fangled banks arrived from Edinburgh and Glasgow.

But this year, Rab Carter had a solicitor contact William to say that their bond contract was not in order, had never been signed and Carter had important changes that must be agreed to. Patrick was flummoxed as within the Guild it was like family and everyone met their obligations. He re-read the bond and had William his son and solicitor verify it. There were some messy details with the signatures that could possibly be argued between non-friends but otherwise it all seemed in order. The bond terms had been honored by Carter over the last the three years and that should also count. The next half-year payment was due next week and Patrick wondered if there was a link there.

That Friday they were drinking at the Coach Inn with the Town Council after the meeting and Patrick took the opportunity over an ale or two to question Rab Carter.

“What’s all this about the bond? There’s nothing wrong with it and you know it! Do you have a problem meeting the interest payment at the end of the month? If so, maybe we can find a way to sort that.”

“Patrick, I wish it were that simple. I need my solicitor to buy me time on the payment, while I arrange some other issues.”

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“Rab, if its money, we can fix it. If its family or something else, remember in the Royal Arch brotherhood we are there for each other.”

“It’s really a family matter. I have to help my oldest son. He has a problem that needs cash immediately.”

“Rab, tell me the whole story, or stop now and let our solicitors sort it out.”

“Aye, Patrick, maybe you’re right. It’s a longish story. My son is being blackmailed by two gits in Brechin and needs to make the first payment or else. Apparently, he did something bad and they have threatened to tell all Forfar and ruin his and my reputation here.”

“Ach, we can fix that. At my advanced age, I have more lurid stories about people in Brechin that you can possibly believe. Mostly its bad dealings but there’s a few sexual misdeeds mixed-in there as well for good measure. Who’s doing the black-mailing? You also know that the first payment is never the last one with blackmailers!”

“It’s those two that own the old mill, Patrick. They caught Aengus in bed with one of their wives, and she for self-preservation claimed it was rape. They whipped him well and good and probably the wife as well, but now they want money from us loons to keep quiet.”

“Rab, I think those are the two who stole a load of linen last year near Finavon. They were never caught but everyone who needs to know knows. How can we link all this?”

No, maybe I have a better idea. I know some in Brechin who would dearly like to know that those two wives were < selling kisses for sixpence > to young men from Forfar, like your son. A reputation like that in a town such as Brechin, that would finish all of four of them. Does the Bible not say an eye for an eye?”

Two weeks later Patrick’s Bond was paid on time, his ale was pre-paid for him for a week in the Coach Inn, and Rab Carter’s son was admitted as freeman and master in the Shoemaker’s Guild.

All was good in Forfar, but perhaps not so for some in Brechin.

18 Uncles, Cousins & Brothers

Now in her fifties, Elizabeth sometimes took the time to reflect during a quiet moment in the parlor on her large and wide-spread family. She was the eldest child of the Whyte family and loved to keep in touch with her many nieces and nephews. She knew that the girls were much impressed by her as a strong independent woman in a world dominated by the men. All those years ago she had dedicated herself to helping the women in the family with their challenges in life and to be a support for them when needed. Today, though, for once her mind turned to the men.

The one question that stood out was: why had so many of their young men died or left Forfar? Yes, there was unfortunately a lot of disease around, especially in Dundee and infant mortality was still a big problem. The lack of opportunity for the men to find meaningful local work when they left school had a big impact. But what a waste! She had seen her brothers’ deep frustrations with family control of their lives and the prospect of junior roles in the tannery. She understood their need to get away or do something different, as her beloved husband, William had been through that himself.

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It was so hard for the family to lose their young men, especially as the girls had no choice but stay and put-up with things as best they could, with opportunities for a decent marriage few and far between. Jane and Margaret had done well, but Isobel and Anne had married well beneath them - Isobel out of desperation at thirty-five and Anne much too young and too quickly. Catherine, as they all had expected, was still a spinster.

Uncles...

Since before she was born, the family Tan Works had been run by her Uncles Robert and John and later with their younger brother Patrick, her father. The three of them had owned the Tannery in equal shares. Robert had been Deacon of the Shoemakers' Guild, but the Guild's importance in town had waned substantially over the years. It was criticized for its outdated apprenticeship system where weaving offered the young men in town better money and a much shorter apprenticeship. Also, the Guild's restrictive trade practices were now openly challenged and there was discussion in Parliament of bringing an end to the Burgh Guilds.

With the death of her two uncles and Uncle John's sons William and Robert before 1820, her father had become the sole owner of the business and had led it with a strong will and clear purpose over the last twenty years. Uncle William, the third brother had not seen any opportunity in Forfar and had left early-on for the tannery business in Dundee, where he had lived unmarried for many years. Later he had taken-in his nephew William, John's eldest son who had left Forfar for his own reasons.

Cousins...

At twenty-four she had married her first love, her first cousin William and gone with him to Dundee where he worked with his uncle. Dundee was in those days was very smelly and over-crowded with inadequate sewerage, drainage facilities and poor water supplies. Tragically William and their infant daughter Margaret had died together three years later from disease. So, at twenty-seven she had returned to the calmer world of Forfar as a widow and having lost her only child.

Last year she had been surprised when Uncle William had left all his estate to her in his testament. She knew this gesture had been in memory of her husband as the two Williams had been very close, almost like father/son. This second inheritance had given her financial independence for the rest of her life and the ability to help others in the family.

Uncle John's second son Robert had stayed in the family Tannery but died suddenly at only 28 leaving his wife, Isobel Byers and three young children. Elizabeth and all the family had come to her support and, together with Margaret and Jane, they had become close friends with Isobel. All four ladies worked together on a number of ideas and projects, and wherever they could manage their many children and infant schooling as one family. Isobel had remarried with William Hunter a solicitor and assistant Town Clerk, and had produced five more children to keep herself busy.

Brothers

Growing up they had all been wee boys for her, with David the oldest four years younger than her and Robert the youngest born when she was already eighteen. Now it was almost as if they all had deliberately decided to go off in different direction on leaving school, leaving her and their sisters behind.

David, the oldest brother had left Forfar as soon as he was of age to seek his life and fortune elsewhere - first to Dundee and then Edinburgh. In Edinburgh he married Margaret Rodger but tragically she died in

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childbirth. From there he moved eventually to live Aberdeen. She had received sporadic news of him and then some four years ago had received a note from his church to say that he had died.

William, the second brother had done well at the Burgh Grammar School with the classics and had persuaded his father to let him study law. At eighteen, he was apprenticed to William Hunter a prominent solicitor in Forfar and old family friend. He was good friends with Mr. Hunter's the son, who eventually married William's own sister Jane. William married into the well-known Ure and Adam families and had built a thriving Forfar legal practice and bank agency. She saw him nearly every week and his wife Margaret Adam had become a very dear friend and confidant.

Patrick, the third brother was now forty-seven and had lived on his own in Aberdeen for almost 25 years. He had been a delicate child and clearly not made for the manual work in the tannery. Over the years, with plenty of luck, a loan from his father and careful management of his money he had established a tobacco business on Union Street. He shipped-in pipes, cigars, treated leaf, cigarettes, snuff and even Turkish tobacco from East London. He was probably closest to his brother Thomas and she knew they had met just last year ago in Arbroath - Thomas had smelled of Turkish tobacco for days afterwards!

Thomas, the fourth brother was now the key person at the tannery. He was not the cleverest one, as his teachers had often told him, but he was the one who got things done and everybody in the family loved him for his kind and pleasant personality. Although she, as the eldest, had not been consulted by the men she thought the decision William had crafted for their father to transfer the Tannery immediately to Thomas was right. It also made eminent sense for Thomas to then leave it to William's sons in his testament, as the best way to assure the longer-term survival of the family business.

Finally, Robert, the fifth brother had like William done well at Grammar School and gone on to become a solicitor in Dundee. One day his elder sister Margaret, now part of the Pullar family of bakers, had introduced him to her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Pullar. It was a match made in heaven and they now had three lovely young daughters. Elizabeth knew that Robert and William sometimes found ways to work together on Sherrif-Depute legal briefs, so the family bonds here were good.

It was late in the day and the light was fading fast in the parlor as she rose and went through to the back kitchen to see what cook had prepared for her dinner. Another lonely evening loomed ahead, but the thoughts of all her family and their young men filled her head for the moment and warmed her heart with so many childhood memories.

19 Unrequited Love

Sleights, grudges, perceived superiorities combined with marriage, money, land and other family disputes were common in the close-knit Burgess life of the Royal Burgh of Forfar. They could happen happened so easily through poor communication or misunderstanding as well as real complaints, bad dealings or other issues. Sometimes these feuds became internecine and impacted who was on or not on the Town Council and who could be Provost. They were passed to future generations, sometimes without knowing their origin and so almost became folklore. In the burgess hierarchy there was also a clearly perceived distinction between merchants and the trade Guilds, that was often further complicated by marriages across the two groups.

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The Whyte family were prominent members of the Shoemakers' Guild, the celebrated Sutors of Forfar, and had a long history as Guild Deacons and Town Council members. Now in 1842, Patrick Whyte at eighty-four was head of the family, although he had ceded most of the responsibility for managing the Tan Works to his son Thomas. William, another son was a prominent local solicitor and in 1827 had married into the Adam family with Margaret Campbell Adam.

The Adam's were one of the oldest merchant Forfar families tracing their history back for centuries. William's wife, Margaret Adam/Whyte the daughter of Charles Adam and Ann Ure/Adam and was born in Dundee where her father was a now prominent merchant. Her mother, Anne was the daughter the then Provost of Forfar and Sherrif Clerk for Forfarshire. Anne's own mother, Margaret Campbell was a daughter of the Campbells of Carse of Gowrie that had also been Sherrif of Forfar. So, the Adam family was well-known and well-connected across the County.

The said Charles Adam's older brother John had married Anne Ure's younger sister Margaret and their large family had stayed in Forfar for a number of years. John, who had done well at school and gone on to become a surgeon, joined the Honorable East India Company Service in 1815 as a military surgeon. His wife and ten children had stayed in Forfar until the boys had completed Burgh school. Over the years since, many of the Adam family had followed him to make their career or a marriage in the Madras Presidency in India.

Thomas Whyte had been at the Burgh school with several of the Adam boys and while Thomas was seen as a bit of a plodder in class, the Adam boys had done well. After leaving school at fifteen he had joined the family firm while the Adam's boys had gone on to further studies. Anne was one of the youngest daughters in the Adam family and almost ten year younger than Thomas.

In 1828 when she was almost eighteen, Thomas began to notice how she had changed from the waif he had known into a beautiful young lady with long dark tresses, and he was totally smitten. Over the next year, he tried every way he knew to meet her through her brothers and sisters. They all knew Thomas and liked him, but had they had moved on since school and he was working in the Tannery. It was not easy for him with the family around all the time and so very few social opportunities, but he was sure Anne knew that he liked her.

Then one day at the Fair he came face to face with her. He smiled, but was suddenly stuck for words and, deeply embarrassed, said something silly about her dress. It was not that she had said No. She just stared at him for a moment, then turned her back and walked off into the crowd. He was completely crushed! Deeply wounded by this rejection and by what he saw as the feigned superiority of the Adam's he began to feel bitter towards them all.

The one exception in his mind was his sister-in-law Margaret Adam/Whyte, who had grown up in Dundee and knew well from her own marriage experience about relations between the Adam and Whyte families. She had watched from afar Thomas' doomed love for her young cousin Anne. It was obvious to her, and any other woman, that her cousin Anne knew-well that she was attractive to men and clearly expected much more from life than any marriage in Forfar could offer. So, Margaret was not surprised, but very sad for Thomas whom she had grown to know so well. She talked with him from time to time over the next months to try to help him through this rejection and difficult time in his life. Then the next year at the St James Fair Thomas met Jessie Wilson from Tannadice and his world changed for the better.

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It had all made Margaret think back to her own moment-in-time at 23, when at a formal reception near Forfar for the County dignitaries and their families she had seen William for the first time. He was dressed in all his finery as a solicitor to the Sherrif Court and she had carefully but demurely made sure that he noticed her. In due time there were in good conservation in a very public and safe setting. He was a good-looking man and clearly had an eye for the ladies, but from then on Margaret made sure that his eye was only for her.

In 1832 Anne Adam, scarcely only twenty-one, had sailed to India with her new husband, Dr. Donald Young, a young colleague of her father with the HEICS in the Madras Presidency. She was told that service in India was normally a permanent move, with a three-year furlough in mid-career to visit family and the home-country but at the time she did not seem to take-in the real and practical meaning of this for her. Sadly, as all the wives out there came to learn, there was often a heavy price to pay by them and their children for living in a hot climate so far from home.

Now in 1842, Margaret had nine children born and Thomas two illegitimate daughters with Jessie and was happy in his life. But the Adam name still rankled with him.

20 Hunt the Gowk

It was a calm spring morning in Forfar in early April, 1842. For the last two days the Manor house had been in pandemonium, filled with shrieks, laughter and noisy children's babble. Last week after much pleading and endless promises of good behavior Margaret had said the children could all play Hunt the Gowk together on April 1. William was away in Cupar Angus, which was probably a good decision on his part. Margaret and the staff had survived for another year and had plenty to smile about for themselves.

First, all morning long the children had tried the tricks and games, they had planned the week before, with the cook Mrs. Lindsay, the housemaids Isobel and Mary and then Thomas and the gardeners. The staff played along with them, but to the children's dismay few of the false errands and mysterious messages really worked, that is until Alex. The young gardener fell for their story hook, line and sinker and off he went on an errand way up the East High Street. When he returned, it was to a lot of laughter from the children and, red from embarrassment, he was roundly teased for his gullibility by Thomas and the maids.

Next day, April 2, was Taillie Day. William, John, Robert, Ann, Margaret, and the two little ones George and Elizabeth all joined in the morning fun throughout the house. William hid first, in the back of the scullery, and after a time it needed a nod and a wink from cook for the two little ones to find him there and tag him. The three of them then set off to find the others and tag them. There was so much squealing and running around in the house that it was sometimes difficult to know who was hiding and who was hunting. The last to be found was Robert who was found hiding under his own bed. He it started all over again with little Elizabeth this time being the last to be found - and only because her screams of delight gave her away under her mother's skirts. Once they were all suitably exhausted, or more correctly Margaret and the staff had had enough, it was time to eat.

After lunch, Margaret let the three older boys go out to see if they could secretly attach some tails to the busy town folk. Many shopkeepers saw what they boys were up to but did not let on and played the game. Great success was had with several gentlemen coming in and out of the Sherrif Court and who then went on their way unknowing what was attached to their back - to great mirth from the boys and others in the street. Two rather smart ladies were similarly tagged while engaged in an animated

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conservation in the middle of Castle Street, but were saved from embarrassment a few minutes later when one of their friends noticed their tails. It was all great innocent fun and the three boys returned home full of glee and with many stories for their younger siblings.

For Margaret, it was all a welcome relaxation to the normally very staid rules of the house and a rare moment of family fun. Just watching her little ones run around and try to help the older ones had brought a lump to her throat and a strong sense of family well-being. In today's strict and very earnest Scotland fun was considered a forbidden luxury and strongly frowned on, especially by the church. However, the shining happy faces of her daughters and the glee in young ones' eyes made it all more than worth it. It was also clear that all the staff had enjoyed the time as well and had played their roles to the full - she must remember to thank them all.

Her children ranged from William at fourteen, through Ann at nine, down to little Jane at just two years old. It was not often that they found things to share or do together, both boys and girls. She though this year William, her eldest had made a special effort to involve his younger sisters, and she was pleased to see such kindness and generosity growing in him. She would share all this joy with William tonight when he got home.

Margaret was, however, becoming concerned about William on another level. After some years of little effort at school to the despair of his teachers, he had in the last two years finally understood why he went to the Burgh school and what the purpose was in learning. He would finish school next year at fifteen and then things had to be decided. While he had become a good student, he had not really excelled at any anything in particular. However, she thought that maybe one day he might make a good school teacher, perhaps for the younger ones.

Of the three boys at the Burgh Grammar school John was the most organized and studious, but Robert was probably the cleverest and most likely to do well. As for the girls, Anne had just started at the Burgh school and Margaret would soon join her from the Dame infants' school. Their Dame school was supported by the Whyte family with a small group of Burgess friends, and George and Jane would go there soon.

There were ten schools now in Forfar, including the Burgh Grammar and Parish ones, but there was much of room for improvement. Margaret was so proud of all the effort that her sisters Jane and Isobell had put into their determined drive to bring these needs and especially those of the girls to the attention of the Town Council.

It was clear from William's reactions and occasional comments that he was not keen on the idea of an apprenticeship with his Uncle Thomas in the family Tan Works. He had never been attracted to the physical work and sometimes smelly and dirty environment of the tannery. But as Margaret reflected it might be the only thing available to keep him occupied and out of trouble. Maybe when he was seventeen, he could be apprenticed to his father - but that had not yet been discussed in the family.

What Margaret feared most was that he would leave Forfar when he became eighteen and go to Dundee or further afield in search of a life for himself. This had been the path for so many of Forfar's young men and it was hard on the mothers, the families and for all the girls who stayed home.

21 FUN & GAMES

See separate document